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FOR ACTION

RECOMMENDATION FOR SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING FOR A PROGRAMME IN THE AMERICAS AND CARIBBEAN REGION WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION FOR FUNDING FROM GENERAL RESOURCES*

SUMMARY

The present document contains a recommendation for supplementary funding for a country in the Americas and Caribbean region for which no recommendation for funding from general resources is requested at the second regular session of 1994 of the Executive Board. The programme proposal submitted here is aimed at expanding or complementing an ongoing programme in the country concerned. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board approve supplementary funding in the following amount for the programme listed below, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions.

Country/programme	Amount (United States dollars)	Duration
Argentina	3 000 000	1994-1995

A summary of the individual recommendation follows. A table setting out the planned annual phasing of expenditure for the supplementary funding proposal is given at the end of the document.

* In order to meet documentation deadlines, the present document was prepared before aggregate financial data were finalized. Final adjustments, taking into account unspent balances of programme cooperation at the end of 1993, will be contained in the "Summary of 1994 recommendations for general resources and supplementary funding programmes" (E/ICEF/1994/P/L.3 and Add.1).

ARGENTINA

Basic data (1992 unless otherwise stated)

Child population (millions, 0-15 years)	10.3
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	24
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	22
Underweight (% moderate and severe)	..
Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) (1990)	140
Literacy (% male/female) (1990)	95/95
Primary school enrolment (% net, male/female)	../..
Percentage of grade 1 reaching grade 4	..
Access to safe water (%) (1988)	65
Access to health services (%) (1985)	71
GNP per capita	$2,790

One-year olds fully immunized against:

tuberculosis:	99 per cent
diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus:	78 per cent
measles:	89 per cent
poliomyelitis:	83 per cent

Pregnant women immunized against:

tetanus:	.. per cent

1. The economic problems of Argentina worsened during the last decade. Unemployment and underemployment, high inflation rates, the budget deficit and the large external debt have been recurrent problems with strong, negative social impacts, such as increasing poverty, deteriorating public social services and the emergence of a "new poor". Over 9 million people live in households below the poverty line, of which 3.2 million are children under six years of age. There has been a drastic fall in family income from the mid-1970s to the 1990s, with the poorest groups suffering a 60 per cent reduction.

2. Reduced family purchasing power has led to increased demands on the public health system, while the public health budget is insufficient to maintain existing service levels, let alone to assimilate large numbers of new patients. In many provinces, health centres have been unable to renew stocks of disposable supplies or to maintain equipment. The reduction of infant and maternal mortality rates has been much slower than expected. The infant mortality rate varies considerably from one province to another, the highest being 40 per 1,000 live births in Formosa and the lowest 16 per 1,000 live births in Buenos Aires.

3. Major priorities to accelerate progress towards achieving decade goals include: (a) more positive mobilization to reinforce primary health care; (b) the institutional strengthening of local services; (c) the establishment of additional local health services; and (d) greater public recognition of the

contributions of health workers. On the positive side, in 1993, the National Congress adopted a federal education law that defines education as a human and social right. Education was made compulsory and free of charge for a 10-year period beginning at five years of age. A massive national immunization campaign to eliminate measles was launched, which covered 95 per cent of all children under 15 years of age. An agreement was signed by the Government and the World Bank to finance a maternal and child health (MCH)/nutrition programme. The programme, designed under the technical coordination of UNICEF, is now starting to be implemented. UNICEF provided technical and administrative assistance to the Federal Water and Sanitation Council to train a team to manage the Inter-American Development Bank loan to improve the sector's performance.

Social communication and mobilization

4. An important way to accelerate progress in child survival, development and protection is through the implementation of the national programme of action for children, which was developed in 1992 in response to the goals of the World Summit for Children. In February 1993, the Government launched a "social plan" into which the national programme of action was fully incorporated. Since Argentina is a federal State, the real challenge lies in defining and implementing goals and plans of action at local levels. An important strategy is to support demonstration projects with strong communication and mobilization effects. In response to the Mayors as Defenders of the Children initiative, two Argentine mayors participated in the International Meeting of Mayors held in Mexico in 1993. The mayors of Rosario, the second largest city in Argentina, and Florencio Varela, in the province of Buenos Aires, presented their goals and municipal plans of action, which have been launched in an effort to improve the social situation of children. A national committee of mayors as defenders of children has been constituted to follow up on the implementation of the plans. The first national meeting of mayors was held in Misiones at the end of 1993. Mid-decade goals were incorporated into the framework of the goals and action plans for the year 2000 in MCH and nutrition.

5. Efforts also are being made with the National Ministry of Health and Social Affairs to persuade the provinces to implement more activities related to the mid-decade goals. Some of the provinces have accepted the challenge. To accelerate implementation of the national programme of action, as well as the provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Government is seeking UNICEF support to strengthen national and local communication systems in order to accelerate social mobilization. The priority of the Government is to raise the profile of children in the national political agenda and to mobilize more private and public resources to improve child survival, protection and development.

6. The exposure of Argentines to mass media is very high. The mass media include 16 newspapers, 8 television channels and 29 radio stations in Buenos Aires and 116 newspapers, 219 television channels and 206 radio stations in the provinces. Radio and television networks reach 98 and 92 per cent of the population, respectively. Over 100 million copies of different magazines are distributed annually. Although this media profile compares favourably with countries with a higher level of socio-economic development, the various types

of media tend to operate in isolation from each other and usually do not collaborate to promote important social goals.

7. UNICEF has been supporting the Government with its social mobilization and communication programme, "First Call for Children", which was initiated with the Special Adjustment Facility for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1988. The main thrust of the programme has been the promotion of the rights of the child through several television spots, radio jingles and the distribution of a great quantity and variety of printed material. In addition, over 1,500 interviews with public figures were broadcast on radio and television, an equivalent of 15,000 centimetres of column space in the main newspapers nationwide. In this regard, the Argentine Association of Radio and Television has been broadcasting messages free of charge. The Private Radio Broadcasting Association has broadcast messages on over 60 radio stations throughout the country to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Government and UNICEF cooperation also included collaboration with the Argentine Paediatrics Association and the Catholic Church. Preliminary work has been undertaken to establish a national forum of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with the participation of over 250 associations to promote social programmes in the poorest areas of the country. These activities will be expanded in 1994 and 1995 through training in social communication, a national network of NGOs, mass communication, production of educational materials and pilot experiences.

8. In summary, there have been partial but not comprehensive efforts to create a nationwide communication strategy to support the national programme of action. Therefore, the proposed programme would bring together all these efforts under a more comprehensive umbrella of coordination. Although an institutional coordinating mechanism for this strategy has yet to emerge fully, there is strong government support for a more coordinated communication strategy to help achieve the mid- and end-decade goals for children.

Training

9. Two seminars will be conducted in 1994 and 1995 to train social communicators, especially from the Ministries of Health and Education, as well as staff of other relevant government and non-government institutions, universities and community leaders in the preparation of educational messages on child survival and child rights. The training will include staff of NGOs and social workers. UNICEF will assist in the development of training modules on the planning, management and evaluation of mass communication campaigns, and the training of community leaders in the better utilization of local forms of communication and community participation.

Support to non-governmental organizations

10. Support will be provided to strengthen the national network of NGOs as a means to promote implementation of innovative child survival, protection and development initiatives with more community involvement. A special award will be created for those NGOs that formulate the most innovative and efficient initiatives for meeting the basic needs of children and youths of low-income families. UNICEF will support the organization of a national biannual congress of NGOs to promote exchange of these experiences. Support will also be provided

to produce the following: (a) a bimonthly bulletin for the network of NGOs that would promote an exchange of information on achievements and constraints of different projects; and (b) video materials to illustrate projects that may be considered successful and replicable.

Mass communication

11. In coordination with the Argentine Association of Radio and Television and the Private Radio Broadcasting Association, UNICEF will promote wider dissemination of Facts for Life through the production of three television spots; a weekly programme on cable television; a weekly radio programme; five radio jingles; three national campaigns; a monthly magazine for children; a monthly programme on open television; a press conference; the organization of musical and sports events; and a cultural week with a strong focus on the rights of the child, including activities related to theatre, sculpture, painting, video and cinema. To complement and reinforce mass media messages, the Government will enlist and promote the cooperation of important organizations, such as trade unions and entrepreneurial associations, neighbourhood organizations, the Catholic Church and NGOs.

Production of educational materials

12. Support will be provided: (a) to produce a yearbook on the situation of children in Argentina; (b) to sponsor the publication of a quarterly magazine on social policies for academics, teachers and researchers, as well as for those who are managing social projects; and (c) to produce three books per year on issues related to national social and economic development in order to encourage debate on how these issues should be handled to benefit children and women. The issues will include the effects of decentralizing the health and education systems, urban violence, particularly child abuse, and unemployed youth.

Pilot experiences

13. The support to pilot experiences will focus on: (a) innovative municipal experiences in basic services (e.g., MCH or sanitation); (b) NGO experiences with abandoned children or street children or with the prevention of drug or alcohol abuse; and (c) public or private experiences on income-generation activities, especially for youth, through revolving credit funds.

14. The programme will be implemented over a period of two years at a total cost of $3 million.

Estimated annual expenditure

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Country/programme	1994	1995	Total
Argentina			
Social communication and mobilization	1 500	1 500	3 000
Total	1 500	1 500	3 000